

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED TERMS

ACT: A bill that has been passed by both the Senate and the House of Representatives, enrolled, and approved by the Governor or passed over the Governor's veto.

ADJOURNMENT: Ending of a meeting or daily floor session. Adjournment of the Senate or the House of Representatives takes place at the close of each legislative day, with the hour and day of the next meeting set before adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT SINE DIE: Ending of the current session of the Legislature. No future meeting date is set except as provided in law.

ADOPTION: Approval or acceptance; usually applied to motions, amendments, and resolutions.

AMENDMENT: A change proposed or made to a bill, resolution, or motion. Amendments to bills and resolutions may be offered in a standing committee, in a conference committee, or on second reading during consideration by the Committee of the Whole.

APPROPRIATION: Legislative authority for expenditure of state money for a specific purpose.

BILL: A proposed law that is sponsored by a legislator and presented to the Legislature for consideration.

CALL OF THE SENATE (HOUSE): A procedure used to compel attendance of absent members.

CALL TO ORDER: The action of the presiding officer that brings either house officially into session.

CAT AND DOG BILL: A bill that makes a specific appropriation for a specific purpose that is not included in the general appropriations bill.

CAUCUS: A meeting of all members of a political party. The term also refers collectively to all members of a political party in a house.

CHAMBER: The official meeting place of the Senate or the House of Representatives.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: The convening of an entire legislative house into a committee for the transaction of business.

CONCURRENCE: Agreement by one house to a proposal or action of the other house.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: A group of legislators appointed by the presiding officer in each house to resolve differences between the houses on a bill.

CONFIRMATION: Approval by the Senate of a nomination for an appointment made by the Governor.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: A conflict created by a personal interest of a legislator that affects the ability of that legislator to vote impartially or that gives rise to an appearance of impropriety. Under current ethics laws, a conflict of interest does not arise from legislation or legislative duties affecting the membership of a profession, occupation, or class.

CONSTITUENT: A person who lives in the district represented by a legislator.

CONVENE: To officially begin a meeting of a legislative body.

DISTRICT: The geographic area of Montana represented by a legislator. Each district is designated by a number. A Senate district consists of two adjoining House of Representatives' districts.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The date on which a law becomes binding.

ENGROSSING: The incorporation of amendments and all appropriate technical corrections into the text of a bill.

ENROLLING: The preparation of a bill in the form that it finally passes the Legislature with appropriate places for documenting the house of origin and approval of a bill.

EX OFFICIO: By virtue of one's office or position.

FISCAL NOTE: A brief document that contains an analysis of a bill's dollar impact on state or local revenue, expenditures, or fiscal liability.

FISCAL YEAR: The 12-month period that is the basis for the state's budgeting and financial activities. The state fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.

HEARING: Public discussion scheduled by a standing committee for the purpose of gathering information on a bill.

INITIATIVE: A process through which citizens may initiate the enactment or amendment of laws or the amendment of the constitution. If a specified percentage of the qualified electors sign a petition, the measure is placed on an election ballot for approval or rejection by the voters. If approved by the voters, the proposal becomes law. The process may also be used to call for a constitutional convention.

INTERIM: The period of time between regular legislative sessions.

JOURNAL: The official chronological record of the proceedings in a house.

LEGISLATOR: A member of either the Senate or the House of Representatives.

LEGISLATURE: The Senate and House of Representatives collectively.

LOBBYIST: A person who is hired to engage in the practice of promoting or opposing the introduction or enactment of legislation before the Legislature or the members of the Legislature.

MAJORITY PARTY: The political party having the most members in a house.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR: An official communication from the Governor that is recorded in the journal.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE (HOUSE): An official communication from the opposite house that is recorded in the journal.

MINORITY PARTY: The political party having the second most members of a house.

MINUTES: A record of the actions taken at a committee meeting that serves as the official record of the meeting.

MONTANA CODE ANNOTATED: The official codified, published version of the statutes of Montana that are of a permanent or general nature.

MOTION: A formal proposal offered by a member.

PER DIEM: Literally “for a day”. The term is often used to refer to a payment that a legislator receives to defray expenses associated with attending official legislative meetings or for conducting official legislative business.

POINT (QUESTION) OF ORDER: A motion of a member that calls attention to a potential violation of order or of the rules and requests a determination by the presiding officer as to whether or not a violation has occurred.

PRESIDING OFFICER: The person who presides over a committee or a house. The term is a gender-neutral term for "chairman".

PREVIOUS QUESTION: A motion to close debate and bring the pending question to an immediate vote.

QUORUM: The minimum number of members of a legislative body required to be present for valid transaction of business.

RECESS: A break in a committee meeting or daily floor session of a house.

RECONSIDERATION: A parliamentary process by which a motion or question that has been acted on may be brought back before the body.

REFERENDUM: The submission of a proposed or enacted law to the people for approval or rejection. The referendum may be initiated by the Legislature or by voters through a petition process.

REGULAR SESSION: The regularly scheduled session of the Legislature that begins in January of each odd-numbered year and lasts for up to 90 days.

REQUESTER: The legislator or committee that asks that a bill or resolution be drafted.

RESOLUTION: A document that expresses the opinion or will of the Legislature or a house of the Legislature or that governs the business of the Legislature or a house of the Legislature.

SPECIAL SESSION: A meeting of the Legislature convened at the request of either the Governor or a majority of the members of the Legislature. A special session may be limited to matters specified in the call of the special session.

SPONSOR: The legislator who introduces a bill or resolution.

STANDING COMMITTEE: A committee established by a house's rules to consider legislation in a specified subject area or to perform other duties.

STATUTE: A written law.

SUBSTITUTE BILL: An amendment that replaces the text of an entire bill. (To be valid, the substitute bill may not change the original purpose of the bill.)

TABLE OR LAY ON THE TABLE: A motion to set aside consideration of the pending question in such a way that its consideration may be resumed at the will of the body.

VETO: An action taken by the Governor to prevent the enactment of a bill.